

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN PRESS BRIEFING FOR MARCH 3, 1976:

Q. THE ACCOUNTS FROM CAIRO -- ACTUALLY FROM KUWAIT -- ON
WHAT EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT SAYS WAS PROMISED EGYPT DURING
THE DISENGAGEMENT. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO TELL US ABOUT
THAT; AND, BASICALLY, CAN YOU TELL US IF THE ACCOUNTS ARE
CORRECT -- IF SADAT IS REPRESENTING, INDEED, WHAT HE WAS
TOLD DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS?

A. THE ONLY THING I CAN SAY IN RESPONSE TO THAT QUESTION,
IS JUST TO RECALL THAT OUR POSITION ON THE UNDERTAKINGS
AND AGREEMENTS WAS SPELLED OUT --

A. -- IN GREAT DETAIL LAST AUTUMN AT THE TIME THE INTERIM
AGREEMENT ON THE SINAI WAS PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS.

Q. SPELLED OUT WHERE?

A. TO THE CONGRESS. AS WE HAVE SAID -- AND I WILL
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REAFFIRM THIS MORNING -- ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS
REACHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THAT AGREEMENT HAVE BEEN

TRANSMITTED TO THE COMMITTEES OF THE CONGRESS CONCERNED.

Q. WELL, YOU CAN SCARCELY HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY
SURPRISE BY THESE TWO STATEMENTS OF SADAT, SINCE HE'S
SAID BOTH OF THEM SEVERAL TIMES IN PUBLIC FOR THE PAST
SIX MONTHS. SURELY YOU'RE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH BOTH OF
THESE CLAIMS -- EITHER TO SAY THAT THEY ARE INTERPRETA-
TIONSO F WELL-KNOWN DECLARATIONS OF AMERICAN POLICY, OR
ELSE THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY SOMETHING THAT PRESIDENT
FORD OR SECRETARY KISSINGER SAID TO SADAT.

A. THE FACT IS I AM NOT PREPARED OR ABLE TO GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID IN RESPONSE TO BARRY'S QUESTION. ON THE SINAI AGREEMENT, FROM TIME TO TIME THERE HAVE BEEN QUESTIONS ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS, AND I THINK WE HAVE FAIRLY CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THE POSITION WHICH I JUST STATED THIS MORNING.

Q. ONE OF THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE AGREEMENT IS NOW ON THE RECORD SAYING WHAT THE AGREEMENTS ARE. NOW, WHY CAN'T YOU COMMENT ON THE SPECIFICS OF IT?

A. I AM ONLY ABLE TO RESPOND THE WAY I HAVE.

U. BUT WHY? -- WHERE THERE'S NO BREACH OF SECRECY INVOLVED ANY MORE, IT SEEMS.

Q. HE FIRST SAID THIS IN A SPEECH IN CAIRO ON THE 28TH OF SEPTEMBER. YOU'VE HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO PREPARE AN ANSWER.

A. I THINK THAT IN THE PAST, WHEN SUCH STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE -- REPORTED -- WE HAVE ANSWERED QUESTIONS IN THIS WAY, AND THIS IS THE WAY I HAVE TO ANSWER IT TODAY.

Q. SHOULD WE ATTRIBUTE ANY SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FACT HERE THAT YESTERDAY AND TODAY YOU'RE NOT SPECIFICALLY DENYING EITHER OF THESE?
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A. I AM JUST BEING VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE SAID IN THE PAST. EVERYTHING THAT IS RELATED TO THE SINAI AGREEMENT HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS.

Q. YOU SEEM TO BE SUGGESTING THAT THERE IS SOME LANGUAGE THAT CONFORMS WITH WHAT SADAT SAYS HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE CONGRESS.

A. I AM NOT TRYING TO IMPLY ANYTHING.

Q. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THAT ALL LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENTS HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE CONGRESS. HE DID NOT SAY ALL THE AGREEMENTS.

A. I SAID ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS, AND I THINK THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE SAID IN THE PAST ALSO.

Q. "RELEVANT" WOULD MEAN LEGALLY BINDING.

A. I THINK I WILL JUST STICK WITH "ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS"--IN AN ALL-INCLUSIVE SENSE.

Q. DOES THAT "ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS" THEN COME OUT, GIVEN THE PROBLEMS YOU FACE AND THE WAY YOU TALK, TO A DENIAL?

A. IT IS NOT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. IT IS MY RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION. AND WHEN WE HAVE BEEN ASKED IN THE PAST ABOUT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS--I THINK WE HAVE RESPONDED IN THIS WAY. AND THAT IS THE WAY I AM RESPONDING TODAY.

Q. WELL, THAT LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THERE IS SUCH A SECRET AGREEMENT, BUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT CONSIDER IT AS RELEVANT TO THE SINAI AGREEMENT. IS THAT THE WAY YOU INTEND TO LEAVE IT OPEN?

A. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN TRANSMITTED TO THE COMMITTEES OF THE CONGRESS.

Q. WELL, CAN I BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT THAT? WOULD THE UNCLASSIFIED

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KINDS OF AGREEMENTS PRESIDENT SADAT REFERRED TO IN PUBLIC BE REGARDED AS RELEVANT?

A. I REALLY AM NOT ABLE TO GO BEYOND THAT.

Q. WELL, LET'S BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT TRANSMITTING IT TO CONGRESS. HOW WAS THIS DONE, WHAT COMMITTEES--AND WAS IT PUBLIC OR PRIVATE--IN WRITING, OR WITH SOME ELDER STATESMEN?

A. I BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE TRANSMITTED IN WRITING TO THEM--BUT I WILL GET YOU THE LIST OF THE COMMITTEES.

Q. YOU SEE, I MEAN I WILL PUT MY QUESTIONS ANOTHER WAY. LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING, O.K.?

WERE ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS REACHED DURING THE SINAI NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTED TO WRITING, IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND WERE THEY ALL TRANSMITTED TO CONGRESS IN WRITING, IF YOU KNOW?

A. I CANNOT ANSWER THAT, BUT I WILL JUST REAFFIRM THAT ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS WERE TRANSMITTED TO THE CONGRESS.

Q. YOU WOULD REGARD SUCH AGREEMENTS AS SADAT DESCRIBED AS RELEVANT, I GATHER.

A. I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ON WHAT PRESIDENT SADAT SAID OR WHAT ANYONE ELSE AS SAID. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THIS --

Q. ASSUMING THAT THIS HAS ALL BEEN ON THE PUBLIC RECORD

FOR MANY MONTHS FROM EGYPT, CAN YOU AS A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TELL US WHY SADAT AT THIS POINT IS MAKING A PUBLIC DECLARATION ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS?

A. I THINK THAT IS A QUESTION THAT REALLY WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED TO HIS SPOKESMAN.

Q. WERE THERE ANY SECRET AGREEMENTS?

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A. NO. WE HAVE NOT WITHHELD ANY SECRET AGREEMENTS FROM THE CONGRESS. THEY HAVE ALL BEEN COMMUNICATED.

Q. WE HAVE NOT WITHHELD ANY SECRET AGREEMENTS?

A. ALL RELEVANT AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE CONGRESS.

Q. LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY. THE INITIAL FORMULATION OF THIS WITH SADAT BACK IN SEPTEMBER WAS THAT HE RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM PRESIDENT FORD ON THESE TWO POINTS. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO THE MEETING DURING THE SUMMER THAT PRECEDED THE SINAI AGREEMENT. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO LOOK INTO THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER -HERE WAS A SET OF ASSURANCES GIVEN TO THE EGYPTIANS THAT IN ANY MATERIAL WAY CHANGED U.S. MIDEAST POLICY IN THE WAYS SUGGESTED BY SADAT IN HIS STATEMENTS?

A. FIRST, I AM GOING TO STAND ON WHAT I SAID INITIALLY. SECONDLY, I WILL LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION FURTHER TO SEE IF I CAN SAY ANYTHING MORE THAN WHAT I SAID.

Q. COULD I ASK THE QUESTION IN A DIFFERENT WAY? WOULD ANY ALERT MEMBER OF THE RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY WHAT HE HEARD FROM PRESIDENT SADAT?

A. YOU WOULD HAVE TO ASK THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES.

Q. HAVE SADAT'S PUBLIC COMMENTS PROVOKED OR PROMPTED ANY MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO COME TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND ASK QUESTIONS?

A. NOT THAT I HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF.

Q. WAS SENATOR MANSFIELD IN TOUCH WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT BEFORE HIS DECLARATION TODAY THAT THERE OUGHT TO BE AN INVESTIGATION OF THIS WHOLE MATTER?

Q. LEAVING APART WHAT WAS TOLD, WHETHER YOU CAN COMMENT ON IT, LET'S TAKE THESE TWO THINGS AS A MATTER OF POLICY; AND PERHAPS YOU CAN RESPOND TO IT. IS IT AMERICAN POLICY

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THAT IT WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO PREVENT ANY ISRAELI ATTACK ON SYRIA?

A. OUR POLICY IS FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IN THE MIDDLE EAST--ALL-INCLUSIVE--INVOLVING ALL PARTIES. THEREFORE, IT FOLLOWS WE WOULD BE OPPOSED TO ANY HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. AND DOES THE UNITED STATES BELIEVE THAT THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS?

A. OUR POSITION ON THE PALESTINIANS IS AS HAS BEEN STATED MANY TIMES AND HAS NOT CHANGED.

Q. WHAT IS WHAT--AGAIN--THAT UNTIL THEY RECOGNIZE ISRAEL, IS THAT IT?

Q. THAT'S THE PLO.

Q. YOU KNOW: THE PALESTINIANS --

Q. NO. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE PALESTINIANS AS A PEOPLE, IF THEY ARE AN IDENTIFIED GROUP?

A. ON THE QUESTION OF THE PLO, THE POSITION IS AS STATED. I THINK WE HAVE SAID, AND I THINK IT IS REFLECTED IN SEVERAL STATEMENTS, WE RECOGNIZE THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. BUT THE QUESTION THAT HAS REALLY BEEN PUT BEFORE US, BARRY, I THINK, IS THE PARTICIPATION OF THE

PLO IN A GENEVA-TYPE CONFERENCE; AND OUR POSITION ON THAT IS WE DO NOT AVE A PROBLEM, BECAUSE UNTIL THE PLO RECOGNIZES THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND ACCEPTS THE RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER THAT.

Q. WHAT, AGAIN, IS T;E POLICY ON THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE?

A. IN WHAT REGARD?

Q. WELL, WITH REGARD TO TH: PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S CLAIM
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TO A HOMELAND.

A. THESE CLAIMS, AS FAR AS I AM AWARE, HAVE BEEN ADVANCED, PRIMARILY IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, BY THE PLO.

Q. I'M NOT ASKING YOU ABOUT THE PLO THOUGH. I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT SAYING THAT THE PLO IS THE EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE --

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. -- OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

A. I DID NOT IMPLY THAT IN ANY WAY.

Q. THEREFORE, I'M ASKING, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL U.S. POSITION?

A. I THINK WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT IS GOING TO HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH IN ANY OVERALL SETTLEMENT.

Q. DO THEY STILL HAVE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OR INTERESTS?

A. HOWEVER THEY HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED IN THE PAST, STILL EXIST TODAY.

Q. SHOULDN'T PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TAKE PART IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, IRRESPECTIVE OF PLO?

A. I THINK WE WOULD HAVE TO SEE HOW THAT PROPOSITION WAS PUT FORWARD.

Q. IS THIS THE POSITION, AS YOU QUOTE, THE WAY SADAT PUT IT: "THE UNITED STATES PLEDGES ALL IT CAN DO TO INSURE PARTICIPATION OF PALESTINIANS IN ANY SETTLEMENT"? IS THAT U.S. POSITION?

A. I THINK THE U.S. POSITION IS AS IT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED IN VARIOUS, INNUMERABLE PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

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Q. IS THIS RIGHT--IS THIS THE U.S. POSITION--THAT THE U.S. PLEDGES TO DO ALL IT CAN TO INSURE PARTICIPATION OF PALESTINIANS IN ANY SETTLEMENT?

A. WE HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND THE ROLE THAT THAT PROBLEM FACES IN A WHOLE RESOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST. BUT I AM NOT GOING TO USE OTHER PEOPLE'S WORDS TO CHARACTERIZE A PROBLEM THAT HAS BEEN ARTICULATED BY THE PRESIDENT AND BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE. IT HAS BEEN ARTICULATED AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AND IT REMAINS AS IT HAS BEEN STATED, AS THE RECORD SHOWS.

Q. YOU'RE NOT ANSWERING THE QUESTION. YOU KNOW,

YOU'RE NOT ANSWERING THAT QUESTION. YOU'RE GIVING ME AN
AWFUL LOT OF WORDS WITHOUT ANSWERING THE QUESTION.
SUPPOSE WE REMOVE THE QUOTATION MARKS HERE.

A. YOU ARE TRYING TO RESTATE U.S. POLICY.

Q. I AM ASKING YOU TO STATE IT.

A. I AM SAYING THAT OUR POLICY IS AS IT HAS BEEN STATED
AND AS IT IS ON THE RECORD.

Q. AND THAT IS?

Q. AREN'T YOU SIMPLY TELLING US THAT YOU DON'T REMEMBER
EXACTLY WHAT THE WORDS ARE?

A. I DO NOT HAVE THE RESOLUTIONS IN FRONT OF ME, AND I
AM SURE ALL OF YOU PEOPLE HAVE GOOD LIBRARIES AND GOOD
FILES. WHAT I AM TELLING YOU IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO
CHANGE AND IT IS AS STATED.
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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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